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ATO Japan Briefs Midwest Governors Team; ATO Japan Director Helps Launch Almond Breeze in Japan; Hyogo Chefs Association's Second Tasting Session in 2013 Features Alaska Seafood; American Healthy Cooking Seminar in Osaka Attracts Local Food Business Operators and Media; Japan's Pet Industry Envisions Market Growth

General Information:

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ATO Japan Briefs Midwest Governors Team: The U.S. Embassy - Tokyo's Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Director Steve Shnitzler and Deputy ATO Director Evan Mangino, as well as colleagues from the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service and the Department of State, briefed key Agricultural Representatives from Wisconsin, Iowa, Michigan and Missouri as part of the Midwest U.S.-Japan Association meetings, held in Tokyo on September 8-10. The Association started in 1967 as a meeting for business representatives from both sides of the Pacific and since then, has grown into the Annual Joint Meetings of the Midwest U.S.-Japan Associations. The member states are Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Participants in the briefing included Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey and CEO of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp. Reed Hall.

ATO Japan Director Helps Launch Almond Breeze in Japan: On September 9, 2013, Blue Diamond Growers officially launched Almond Breeze in Japan. Almond Breeze is an alternative to milk and soymilk that is lactose free. Almond Breeze also retains many of the same nutritional characteristics of almonds, notably high calcium and vitamin E. The U.S. Embassy -Tokyo's Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Director Steve Shnitzler gave opening remarks to over 100 press and media representatives and introduced Blue Diamond President and CEO Mark Jansen. The PR event was topped off by the local TV celebrity "Yuka" who noted her excitement that that Almond Breeze was finally available in Japan.



Hyogo Chefs Association's Second Tasting Session in 2013 Features Alaska Seafood: On September 9 through 11, the Hyogo Chefs Association held another tasting event in Arima City, Hyogo Prefecture, featuring Alaska seafood combined with local fresh produce. The association has been holding tasting events periodically in order to educate young chefs. The association, which cooperates with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Japan and Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) and agreed to use Alaska seafood in their tasting events. During the three-day event, about 200 chefs attended the tasting event. U.S. Agricultural

Trade Office (ATO) Osaka's Marketing Specialist Chika Motomura and ASMI Japan representatives also attended the event and thanked the association for their cooperation. The chefs who attended the tasting event showed keen interests in the combination of Alaska seafood and local food ingredients.

American Healthy Cooking Seminar in Osaka Attracts Local Food Business Operators and Media:

On August 27, U.S. Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Osaka held an American healthy cooking seminar and demonstration aimed at promoting the high-quality and the versatility of American agricultural products to the retail and restaurant trade. The event, held at a popular restaurant in Osaka, was attended by more than 30 business participants, including a leading restaurant chain, as well as food processors, retailers, and local media representatives. The seminar introduced a series of healthy “Summer Salad” menus that ATO Osaka developed in cooperation with U.S. Cooperators and an executive chef of a local restaurant, featuring fresh romaine lettuce, celery, watermelons, Calrose rice, California strawberries, and California cheese. ATO Japan Director Steve Shnitzler and Deputy Director Evan Mangino welcomed the guests. By highlighting innovative but easy American-style dishes, the event generated renewed interest in U.S.-grown agricultural products among current and potential users.



Japan’s Pet Industry Envisions Market Growth: The “interpets” Asia Pacific trade show was held from August 22 to 25, 2013 in Makuhari. The show coordinated by Japan’s pet and pet food industry marked its third year. 238 companies and organizations in and outside of Japan participated in the show, including the Pet Food Institute, and introduced useful products for pets and pet owners, such as health-oriented pet foods. At the seminar held on the first day of the show, the Chairman of the Japan Pet Food Association noted that Japan’s pet market has the potential to grow, as he noted several statistical facts and analysis. For example, although the number of children is decreasing in Japan, the number of pets is actually increasing and although the pet ownership rate for dogs and cats in Japan is about 37 percent, which is much lower compared to that of the United States. These statistics indicate the growth potential for the ownership rate of pets in Japan, especially as marketing experts note that trends popular in the United States often also occur in Japan. Japan is the second largest export market for U.S. pet food after Canada, with sales in 2012, the totaling \$294 million.
